NAXOS

Early Music • Alte Musik

DDD

8.553326

DOWLAND

Consort Music and Songs

Rose Consort of Viols

John Dowland (?1563-1626)
Consort Music and Songs

In 1604 John Dowland published his collection of twenty-one dances for five viols (or violins) and lute under the title: LACHRIMAE,
OR SEAVEN TEARES
FIGVRED IN SEAVEN PASSIO-
nate Pauans, with diuers other Pauans, Gali-
ards, and Almands

They were dedicated to Queen Anne, wife of James I and sister of Dowland's current employer, King Christian IV of Denmark. Dowland at the age of forty was at the height of his powers, both as a composer and as a virtuoso lutenist. His career had taken him from England to Paris, where he converted to Catholicism, Germany, Italy and now to Denmark, but he had not yet achieved the place in the musical establishment of the English court that he so coveted. Indeed he would have to wait until 1612 for his appointment as one of the King's Lutes. He survived King James by less than a year, being buried in Blackfriars in 1626 and succeeded in his employment by his son Robert.

Dowland opened this 1604 collection with his unique cycle of seven *Lachrimae* pavans, based on his 'motto' song *Flow my tears*, and followed them with three more pavans, a form described by Thomas Morley in his *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* of 1597: "The next in gravity and goodness unto [the fantasia] is called a Pavan, a kind of staid music ordained for grave dancing". However Dowland's pavans frequently have irregular lengths of phrase, which would be tricky to dance to, and seem much more to be designed as music for the ears of discerning listeners.

Indeed *Semper Dowland semper dolens [10],* its punning title (Ever Dowland, ever doleful) pointing up the composer's fame as a merchant of melancholic music, has more of the fantasia's freedom than the pavan's formality. The opening avoids the slow walking duple footsteps which characterise the dance, and the extraordinary ending, left hanging incompletely in mid-air, defies the expected close. In the middle section Dowland invents a cantus firmus for the alto viol, whilst the other instruments reiterate a falling three-note phrase which could easily be setting the unsung name 'John Dowland'.

Sir Henry Umpton's Funerall [23] is a beautiful tribute to Queen Elizabeth I's Ambassador to France, who died in 1596. His memorial painting now in London's National Portrait Gallery shows him to have been a player of both the lute and the bass viol. Dowland's wordless elegy for this musical courtier is a piece of apparent simplicity concealing great art, with its restrained stillness and gravity resulting from a carefully conceived building and release of melodic and harmonic tension. In a complete contrast of mood, *Mr. John Langton's Pavan [1]* is a warm, sunny piece in the major key. Langton, a Lincolnshire landowner, had been knighted in 1603, but this seems to have escaped the composer's notice.

Only four of the dances here *(Sir Henry Umpton's Funerall [23],* M. *Nicholas Gryffith his Galiard [19], M. Thomas Collier his Galiard* [8] and M. *George Whitehead his Almand* [20]) are not known in other arrangements. The relationship between the remaining dances in Dowland's 1604 publication and other versions of them in settings for lute solo or as songs is often difficult to unravel, but in most cases the versions heard here are the most polished. The opportunity of expanding the original lute accompaniment of a song like *Can she excuse my wrongs [12]* for the four lower viols in *The Earle of Essex Galiard* [3] arranged from it, allows Dowland not only to fill out the texture, but also to indulge in additional playful passagework and to draw more attention to the popular tune *The Woods so wilde* concealed in the final section. If, as seems likely, the poem of this song was written by the ill-fated Earl of Essex after one of his quarrels with Queen Elizabeth, this may well be a reference to his habit of withdrawing from court to his country estate.

Whilst most of Dowland's reworkings are from his own material, *M. Buctons Galiard* [6] is a parody of Lassus's famous chanson *Susanne un jour* which was known throughout Europe. Uniquely in this collection it begins, like the chanson, one part at a time, with Lassus's distinctive two-part counterpoint. The final section of this galliard has a delightfully stretched timeless quality which results from the need to adapt Lassus's duple-time chanson to the triple measure of the dance.

It has not been possible to identify all the persons to whom Dowland dedicated his dances, and there is a touch of irony that he should include both his employer Christian IV in the martial *The King of Denmark's Galiard* [16] and a notorious Cornish pirate who was convicted of attacking Danish vessels in *Captaine Digorie Piper his Galiard* [15].

The wistful yearning of the latter's opening phrase, also used by Dowland for his song *If my complaints could passions move* perhaps suggests his sympathy for the young brigand. Other galliard dedicatees include Dowland's friends and patrons: Henry Noel [7] was an Elizabethan gentleman who had written to Dowland in Germany in 1596 reporting the Queen's wish that the composer should return home, while Sir John Souch [21] also received the dedication of Dowland's *Third and Last Booke of Songs in 1603.* It seems clear that the order in which Dowland arranged his galliards in the 1604 collection reflected the social status of the dedicatees, starting with the King of Denmark, ranging through the ranks of courtiers and ending with the commoners, including M. Nicholas Gryffith [19] who was MP for Caernarvon, and the completely unknown M. Thomas Collier [8]. This last galliard is remarkable for its use of two equally high top parts, which toss melodic ideas imitatively between them in a style that is very different from that of the rest of the collection.

Thomas Morley described the almain as "a more heavie daunce then this [the galliard] (fitlie representing the nature of the people, whose name it carrieth) so that no extraordinarie motions are used in dancing of it". Certainly M. *George Whitehead his Almand* [20] is a somewhat four-square piece, with its block chords and simple harmonies. *Mistresse Nichols Almand* [2], with its jaunty song-like melody, is treated in a much more flowing style, with elegant running passages for the accompanying instruments.

However original his writing for viols may have been, Dowland's approach was always rooted in his own experience as a virtuoso lutenist. The alliance of his flamboyant technical skill with his fertile invention led to the creation of a wealth of pieces which are the crowning glory of renaissance lute music. *A Fancy* [13] is not actually attributed to Dowland in the Cambridge manuscript in which it survives, but bears all the hallmarks of his style. It starts with an imitative idea related to the popular tune *All in a Garden Green* before revelling in a series of entertaining displays based on fleeting scale passages and vibrant repeated *notes*. *Farewell* [9] is an altogether more sober affair, reflecting its use of the *In Nomine* form, in which the plainchant *Gloria tibi Trinitas* is used as a cantus firmus, placed here in the treble part. Even so, Dowland relishes a move into a swinging compound rhythm two thirds of the way through, and ends with some fast decorative embellishments. *Dowland's adew for Master Oliver*

Cromwell [18] has a curious texture: it is a solo lute pavan published in *The Second Booke of Songs* with a part for bass viol., which emphasises the dark serious tone of the piece. The dedicatee appears to have been the uncle of the more famous Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, but the context for this 'adew' remains a mystery.

Dowland's *First Booke of Songs or Ayres* was published in 1597 and really started the vogue in England for solo song with lute accompaniment. This was only one performance option: Dowland also provided three lower vocal parts, which might also be replaced by viols, with or without the plucked instrument. The songs range in mood from the conventions of the love-lorn pastoral complaint in A *shepherd in a shade* [4] to the far more heartfelt personal despair of *All ye whom love or fortune hath betrayed* [22] with its trenchant chromatics and sighing syncopations. *Burst forth my tears* [17] dramatically invokes tears in a way that looks forward to Dowland's later obsessions with weeping and darkness.

Sweet stay awhile [11] and Lasso vita mia [5] both come from Dowland's last book of songs *A Pilgrimes Solace* published in 1612. The gently erotic text of the former inspires a delicate intimacy in Dowland's setting, while the latter, his only setting of an Italian poem, is one of a small group of songs with obbligato treble viol parts. Like many earlier renaissance song writers Dowland makes use of the punning potential of several of the syllables of the text (which can also be used as names for notes of the hexachord: la, so, mi, fa, re) by setting them to the appropriate pitches. The emphasis on the semitone between mi and fa, together with the disembodied despondency of the treble viol's suspensions lend to this song a darkly melancholic character which provides a perfect foil to the dramatically free recitation of the text.

If melancholy was the fashionable Elizabethan conceit with which John Dowland may wish to have been most closely associated, this was only one aspect of his character. The songs, lute fancies and dances here show that the 'passionate pavans' with which his 1604 collection open perhaps have all the more impact when we hear them as just one element in the output of this many-faceted and endlessly fascinating composer.

John Bryan

Rose Consort of Viols

The Rose Consort of Viols (John Bryan, Alison Crum, Sarah Groser, Jonathan Manson and Susanna Pell) takes its name from the celebrated family of viol-makers, whose work spanned the growth and flowering of the English consort repertoire. With its unique blend of intimacy, intricacy, passion and flamboyance, this repertoire forms the basis of the Rose Consort's programmes ranging from Taverner and Byrd, to Lawes, Locke and Purcell, and expanding to include singers, lutes and keyboard instruments. The Consort has also commissioned and performed works by contemporary composers, including Sir Harrison Birtwistle. The Consort performs extensively throughout Britain and the continent of Europe, appears regularly on the BBC and in major London concert halls, and has made a number of highly acclaimed recordings. It has received awards for its research and performance of newly devised programmes, some of which have been toured on the British Early Music Network, or performed at leading festivals in York, Bruges, Utrecht and Cologne.

Catherine King

Catherine King studied at Cambridge University and at the Guildhall School of Music. She appears regularly at major British and European festivals and in the United States of America, singing in oratorio, and in contemporary music with Singcircle and the Nash Ensemble as well as renaissance and baroque music with Gothic Voices, London Baroque, and the Consort of Musicke.

Jacob Heringman

Jacob Heringman was born in the United States of America but moved to Britain to study the lute and is now based in England. Besides solo work, specialising in the renaissance repertory, he performs regularly with leading ensembles such as the New London Consort, the Dowland Consort, Taverner Players, Musica Antiqua of London and the Musicians of the Globe.

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STEREO

DDD

John DOWLAND

(?1563-1626)

Consort Music and Songs

Playing Time 70:10

Rose Consort of Viols

Catherine King, Mezzo-Soprano • Jacob Heringman, Lute

1	Mr. John Langton's Pavan	4:19
2	Mistresse Nichols Almand	0:52
3	The Earle of Essex Galiard	1:34
4	A shepherd in a shade	2:41
5	Lasso vita mia	4:01
6	M. Buctons Galiard	1:40
7	M. Henry Noel his Galiard	2:45
8	M. Thomas Collier his Galiard	1:30
9	Farewell (In Nomine)	3:25
10	Semper Dowland semper dolens	6:35
11	Sweet stay awhile	3:06
12	Can she excuse my wrongs	2:58
13	A Fancy	3:32
14	M. Giles Hobies Galiard	1:47
15	Captaine Digorie Piper his Galiard	1:44
16	The King of Denmark's Galiard	1:20
17	Burst forth my tears	4:19
18	Dowland's Adieu for Master Oliver Cromwell	4:46
19	M. Nicholas Gryffith his Galiard	2:34
20	M. George Whitehead his Almand	1:40
21	Sir John Souch his Galiard	1:37
22	All ye whom love or fortune	4:20
23	Sir Henry Umpton's Funerall	6:06

All tracks feature 5 viols and lute except: Tracks 4, 11, 12 & 22 (voice, lute); tracks 9 & 13 (solo lute); track 5 (voice, 2 viols, lute); track 17 (voice, lute, bass viol); track 18 (lute, bass viol).

Recorded at St Andrew's Church, Toddington, Gloucestershire, England, from 12th to 14th March, 1995.
Producers: John Bryan, John Taylor
Engineer: John Taylor
Music Notes: John Bryan

Cover Painting: Queen Elizabeth I dancing the Volte with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. (Archiv für Kunst und Geschichte, Berlin)

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